

Consumer Reports Health BEST BUY DRUGS

Free Guidance for Consumers on Prescription Medicines



NEWS UPDATE

ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs

Off-label drug use

[Botox: Not just for wrinkles anymore](#)

When you think of Botox, you probably think of getting rid of facial laugh lines, forehead wrinkles or crow's foot around the eyes. But the drug's active ingredient, botulinum toxin, is used to treat all kinds of medical conditions—though many of them are not approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA).

Botox and related drugs (Myobloc, Dysport) use low doses of botulinum toxin, a powerful natural poison, to paralyze overactive muscles and inhibit sweat glands. They're approved by the FDA for the temporary improvement of frown lines, neck spasms, severe hand and facial sweating, crossed eyes, and twitching eyelids. But the off-label use of Botox and related products has increased substantially, with more than 70 medical and cosmetic applications. The catch? Many of these uses don't have much scientific evidence to back them up.

Find out [whether Botox and related products should be used](#) to treat migraines, headaches, writer's cramp, back pain, excessive sweating, overactive bladder, muscle spasticity, hand tremors, voice problems and other conditions.

Off-label drug use

[Clonidine: Is it really a wonder drug?](#)

Clonidine (generic and Catapres) is a drug commonly used to treat migraine, restless leg syndrome, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), sleep apnea, smoking cessation, Tourette's syndrome, and withdrawal from alcohol and narcotics.

Clonidine could sound like a remedy for all ills, but what is it approved by the FDA to treat? High blood pressure. Given all other uses of clonidine are [off-label, what's the rub?](#)

The evidence for many of those off-label uses consists of only a few studies that are too small or that have other shortcomings which prevents making a clear recommendation. If you or someone you know is prescribed clonidine for any of the above treatments, [read on to see how much evidence there is](#) to support that use. You may be surprised.

Drug safety

[Are drug-coated stents good for angioplasty patients?](#)

When drug-coated stents were first available, they were hailed as life-saving devices, and indeed that was true for many people. Then came alarming news: Studies found that the drug might increase the chance of blood clots, a catastrophic complication with a high risk of causing heart attacks and death. In 2006 the FDA called for further study, and the use of these stents plummeted.

Now new research has shed additional light onto this complicated topic with favor leaning toward drug-coated stents again. Doctors are also re-thinking who the best candidates are for drug-coated and bare metal stents.

If you or someone you know has been recommended to have angioplasty, find out who is best suited to receive a drug-coated stent.

Best Buy Drug Report Highlight:

[Drugs to treat Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Children](#)

Not all children diagnosed with ADHD need to take a drug. But if one is warranted, the choice may be difficult in light of popular drug advertising and free drug samples provided by doctors. Of course, most parents will do everything they can to get the best treatment for their child. But when it comes to drugs for ADHD, shelling out thousands of dollars a year on the brand-name drugs may not provide it.

According to a recent [Best Buy Drugs report](#) on drugs to treat ADHD, no one drug has been proven to work better than any other. Taking into account the evidence for effectiveness, safety, dosing convenience, duration of action, and cost, [click here for the list of Consumer Report Best Buy Drugs to treat ADHD](#).

For additional information on more than [200 prescription drugs](#), alternatives to high-priced drugs and Best Buy selections for the most common, chronic medical conditions, visit ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs.

© 2009 Consumers Union of U.S., Inc., 101 Truman Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10703
No reproduction permitted without written permission.